Big Picture Pedagogy: Finding Interdisciplinary Solutions to Common Learning Problems

Chapter: How do we increase students’ global awareness in the classroom?

The significance of preparing students for the global society has been well recognized by the American Association for Colleges and Universities and other authorities of U.S. Higher Education. As a result, studying abroad has proliferated as a common pedagogy for global citizens across various types of universities and colleges. However, study abroad is not always affordable or accessible for all students. Alternative pedagogies for global awareness need to be identified and examined for their effectiveness. This chapter will discuss such pedagogies for global awareness developed and practiced in five distinctive disciplines (Communications, Literature, Mathematics, Social Work, and Sociology) and identify commonalities as well as differences. Furthermore, the authors will explore common themes that emerge from this interdisciplinary project and address promising areas for future SOTL research.

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Chapter: Teaching Empathy

Teaching and learning about empathy are core elements in liberal arts undergraduate and professional education. It is related to understanding and practicing diversity, gaining multiple perspectives, developing capacity to understand and recognize the value of “other” and practicing effective life and professional skills/competencies. Empathy allows students to develop both heads and hearts in their thinking and doing.

The big pedagogy question that this chapter addresses is “how can we effectively teach and learn about empathy skills with undergraduate and professional students?” The chapter will explore the following ideas:

- Defining “empathy” in undergraduate liberal education and professional learning settings: this section will make the case for empathy as a valuable life skill (including highlighting the consequences of a lack of empathy) and would include a brief literature review of SoTL research related to teaching and learning about empathy in the four disciplines named;
- Articulating the similarities and differences of disciplinary approaches that are committed to teaching and learning about empathy: this section would be an analytical parsing of the different disciplinary approaches to empathy;
- Articulating 3-4 best practices drawn from the four disciplines that are the best teaching and learning models for fostering empathy development;
- Identifying 2-3 research opportunities related to teaching and learning about empathy to undergraduate and professional students.

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